

[For the best reading experience, view this email in your browser.](#)



The California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) supports economic growth and innovation statewide. CalOSBA's core mission is to provide resources to all California small businesses, disabled veteran business enterprises (SB/DVBEs), minority and women-owned businesses, and those individuals who own and operate businesses located in low-wealth and rural communities.

CalOSBA supports outreach and engagement efforts through advocacy, sharing resources, and building resilience through programs and our Technical Assistance Network that supports growth and business sustainability.

This month's newsletter highlights the ecosystem and CalOSBA's efforts to serve California businesses statewide.

From The Advocate: How California is Winning the Ground Game of Small Business Technical Assistance



Tara Lynn Gray, Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA)

Four years ago, the California Office of the Small Business Advocate launched a five-year experiment called the Small Business Technical Assistance

Expansion Program (SB TAEP).

The idea was to provide grants to technical assistance providers so they could “expand” small business services, such as free one-on-one consulting and no-cost or low-cost training, especially to underserved business groups, including women, people of color, veterans and low-wealth, rural, and disaster-impacted communities. Starting with the 2018-19 budget year, [the program allocated \\$17 million of General Fund dollars per year through 2022-23.](#)

It’s not like we were planning for COVID-19 at the time. Nope, it’s not like we could possibly imagine that a worldwide public health and economic cataclysm was going to engulf us and spotlight both the importance of, and the vulnerability of, our small businesses in a way that had never happened before.

Looking back now, however, of course, it feels prescient that the SB TAEP program was in place when COVID-19 hit and “saving our small businesses” became a top economic priority at all levels of government. And yet our office still spends a lot of time explaining “what is Technical Assistance?”

[Click here to read the full article on LinkedIn](#)

Regional Advisors Corner

Sonoma SBDC Experiments with Bilingual Training



The Sonoma SBDC Pitchfest launched March 30, 2022. The program is "a guided experience for start-up and early-stage businesses to learn to create a pitch." Pitching is a topic solidly within the wheelhouse of many TAEP-funded Small Business Centers. But, the new Sonoma SBDC Center Director Louise Dawson is taking a different approach to language support by teaching the material in English and Spanish simultaneously. As the program signup states (in both languages): "PitchFest is in English and Spanish, but Spanish speakers must be comfortable receiving some information in English." Dawson's idea is to provide full support for those more comfortable in Spanish -

- including a live in-class chat function for capturing and translating questions asked in Spanish -- but to unite the two language communities through the training itself.

"We are trying not to divide people more than they already are. This is our way to reflect what is true about our community, that the Sonoma County market is bilingual," said Dawson. She says that 30 percent of her SBDC clients are more comfortable in Spanish or cater to a primarily Spanish-speaking clientele but that most of her Latinx clients are, in fact, bilingual. She acknowledges it will take some practice in the classroom for facilitators to get "a good flow of information" but believes the approach will bring long-term benefits by providing exposure for business owners to the entire local market. The TAEP program exists to help build services for underserved business groups and we applaud new approaches to bridging language divides.

<https://www.sonomasbdc.org/pitchfest/>

Healthcare App Stands Out at Third Global Diversity and Investment Summit

[The Inclusivity Project \(IP\)](#) is an initiative launched by the NorCal SBDC in February 2021 inspired by the drastic decline in black-owned businesses during COVID-19. IP is designed to use business ownership to create generational wealth and provide financial security, stability, and flexibility for black families.

IP capped Black History Month with its third Global Diversity and Investment Summit, featuring a keynote from CalOSBA Director Tara Lynn Gray, a panel of entrepreneurship innovators, and a live pitch competition for five black business founders. You can catch a recap [here](#).

"The pitch competition allows for important mentorship, advisory support, opportunities to network with investors, and instant validation for a business idea. Our goal is to help businesses start, dream, and thrive," said IP Director Chris Horton.

The Grand Prize Winner of the pitch contest was Dr. Steven Moyo of Welfie, which included a \$2500 cash prize, a \$3500 Certificate of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Cohort training registration, and entry into a 2022 ESO Ventures Business Incubator cohort.

Endara Enterprises LLC / Delivers emergency PPE supply chains / Founder: Delia Lovell
<https://endara.com>

Ikenga Wines / The world's first fine palm wine / Founder: Onye Ahanotu
<https://ikengawines.com>

LLENA(AI) / Where AI meets GI for better health / Founder: Charlotta Carter

<https://llenafood.life/>

NYA Tea / NYA Tea exists to inspire, encourage growth within, as well as outside of ourselves / Founder: Kai Oredugba

<http://nyatea.com>

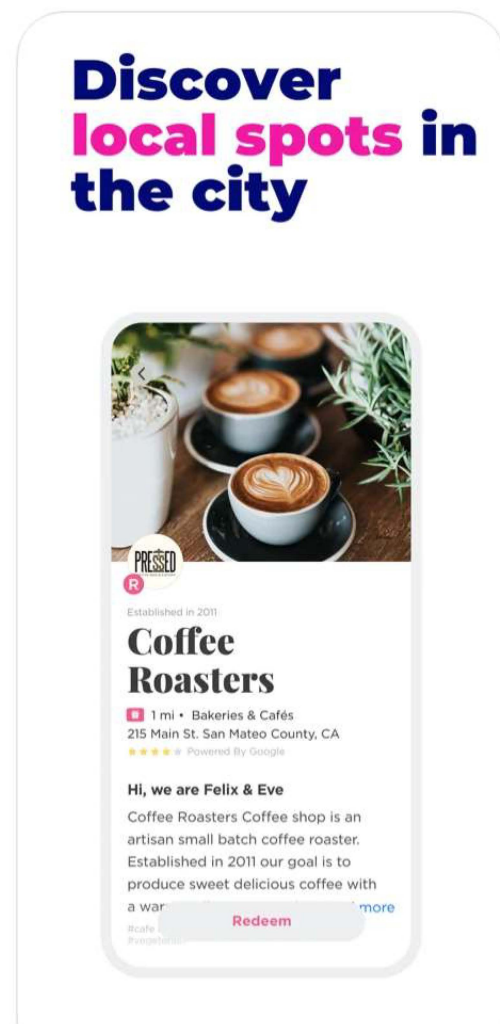
Welfie / Helping kids, and the people who care for them, make better health choices / Founder: Dr. Steven Moyo

<https://www.welfie.com>

New Apps Reward Shopping Small, Shopping Local

COVID-19 reminded us that small businesses are not only the engine of our economy, but the foundation of a thriving community. That is why Chula Vista, Rancho Cordova, Monterey Park, and San Mateo County (SMC) are all California communities partnering with Israeli tech firm [Colu](#) to reward consumers who patronize locally owned businesses.

Each county launched its own, white-labeled mobile app through Colu that lets shoppers earn rewards automatically at participating local businesses; rewards can be redeemed as cash discounts at other local businesses.



The latest example is the County of San Mateo, which alongside City and business partners, used American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to launch the [Choose Local San Mateo County](#) in late 2021.

Already more than 400 businesses are participating in Choose Local San Mateo County, including restaurants, cafes, spas, boutiques, yoga studios, dry cleaners, and more.

Here's how it works:

1. Users download the free Choose Local San Mateo County App from Google Play or the Apple Store and securely link their credit, debit, or prepaid debit cards to their account.
2. Users join reward offers and start shopping and dining locally, earning SMC Points automatically through qualifying purchases made with their linked cards at local businesses. The

app can also be used for online purchases.

3. Users redeem SMC Points for cash discounts at redeeming local businesses. Each SMC Point is worth \$1.

Users can also encourage their favorite businesses to join Choose Local San Mateo County and the apps also use gamification to encourage local buying, ranking high-spending shoppers as "local heroes".

While the biggest Colu success story so far is Boston, where the B-Local app has generated \$1.8 million in economic activity and paid \$400,000 in rewards, the company reports that 50% of new customer interest is coming from California.

The Small Business Administration Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Open to Southern California Small Businesses and Tribal Lands

Small business resiliency and disaster recovery in the face of the ongoing drought in Southern California is critical now more than ever. Small nonfarm businesses in the Pauma and Yuima Tribal Lands and San Diego County are now eligible to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Additionally, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million that were adversely financially impacted by the disaster.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information, and download applications [here](#). Applicants can call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

Resiliency and Outreach

CalOSBA's Team is Expanding to Meet the Growing Needs of Small Businesses Throughout the State

CalOSBA is pioneering a new regional model along with a newly created Outreach and Engagement team to serve the Northern, Central, and Southern California regions and to reach small business owners and partners more effectively throughout the state.

The four mission critical activities the regional team will support are:

1. Provide access to resources through technical assistance providers.
2. Advocate for small business owners across state government.
3. Advance resilience, recovery, and innovation.

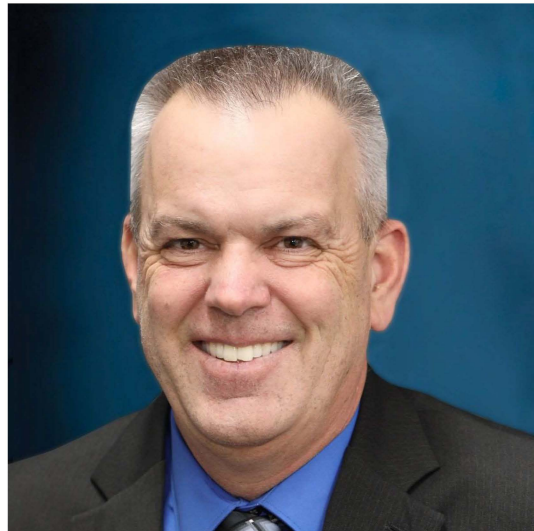
4. Champion economic mobility for underserved small business owners.

Join us in welcoming our regional Small Business Local Engagement Specialists: Jermaine Carter-Gibson in Northern California; Bob Adams in Central California; and Amber Tarrac in Southern California.



Jermaine Carter-Gibson serves the Northern California region. Jermaine holds a bachelor's degree in business marketing. He worked for the California Department of General Services in the Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services conducting statewide outreach prior to joining OSBA. Jermaine also served as a B2B Account Executive with Wiline Networks, as a Verizon Wireless sales manager, and brings a wealth of small business knowledge and business-to-business experience.

William (Bob) Adams serves the Central Valley region. Bob holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Idaho. He served as the Caltrans District 10 Small Business Liaison in Stockton conducting supplier outreach for the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and state Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise certification programs prior to joining OSBA. Bob has a broadcasting background and founded "Local Social" to develop social media and radio/television strategies to increase social media engagement.



Amber Tarrac serves the Southern California region. Amber holds a master's degree in Public Administration from San Diego State University. She worked for the state Employment Training Panel, where she administered workforce development contracts prior to



joining OSBA. Amber has over 15 years of experience in local and state government, economic and workforce development, communications, administering small business and community grant programs, and served as President and CEO for the San Diego County Latino Association (nonprofit).

FEATURED EVENT

Statewide Supplier
Diversity Program
California Department of General Services

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE COMPASS EVENT:
**Where it's at
on the Web**

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022 | 10:00 - 11:30 A.M.

FREE virtual interactive session

to learn about resources that can prepare you for success
in doing business with California State and Federal Government

Sign-up today to register for this event [here](#).

CalOSBA partnered with the Department of General Services (DGS) Statewide Supplier Diversity Program (SDP), the California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), and the Sacramento Metro Business Center to host this free virtual interactive session. The Small Resource Event will take place on Thursday, April 21, 2022. Be sure to register and mark your calendars for this historic event!

For more small business resources and information, visit calosba.ca.gov

No-cost and low-cost training is available through Technical Assistance Centers across the state. Browse the training schedule on the CalOSBA website by [clicking here](#).

[Submit a Request to CalOSBA](#)

Copyright © 2022 CA Office of the Small Business Advocate, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

